

# Prostate Cancer Awareness Month



It may only be the size of a walnut, but the prostate gland will receive a lot of attention during the month of **September, officially designated as Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.**

This year alone, the American Cancer Society estimates doctors will diagnose approximately 230-thousand new cases of prostate cancer in the nation; close to 20-thousand of them will be detected in Florida. Although the state has seen a steady decline in the age-adjusted incidence rate of prostate cancer since it peaked in 1992, it is still the second leading cause of cancer death in Florida, exceeded only by lung cancer.

That has Florida Department of Health Secretary John O. Agwunobi, M.D., M.B.A., M.P.H. encouraging men over the age of 50, to make an appointment with their physician and discuss prostate screening.

“Being screened for prostate cancer may embarrass some men; however, the screening is a critical test that can save lives.” said Agwunobi “African-American men who have a close relative with a prostate cancer diagnosis may be at an increased risk and should consider beginning screenings as early as age 45.”

Other factors that may increase the risk of developing prostate cancer include:

- **Age:** as a man ages, risk increases, average age=70
- **Race:** more common in African-American men
- **Family History:** risk higher for men with a father or brother with disease
- **Diet:** diet high in animal fat boosts risk

Even if you do not fall into one of the “risk categories”, a digital rectal examination and prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test is recommended for early detection. The disease can sometimes show no symptoms during its

early stages, but a few signs to watch for include:

- frequent need to urinate (especially at night)
- difficulty, burning, or pain while urinating
- stiffness in lower back, hips, or thighs, pain during sex

Men can also experience problems with the prostate due to a non-cancerous condition known as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). BPH may cause the prostate to grow larger, block urine flow, and inhibit sexual functioning.

Treatments for prostate cancer range from a testosterone-lowering drug and hormone therapy to radiation aimed at destroying cancer cells. Surgery to remove the gland is a last resort for patients who are otherwise healthy.

**Increase your awareness and learn as much as you can about prostate cancer and treatments.**

**For more information about prostate cancer visit:**

<http://www.doh.state.fl.us/family/cancer>

<http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/prostate/index.htm>

<http://www.tmh.org/frontpage/Default.htm>

**Or call 1-(800)-4-CANCER**

**Or** Raechelle Wooten, MPH CHES  
Chronic Disease Health Educator  
Leon County Health Department  
2965 Municipal Way  
Tallahassee, FL. 32304  
(850) 487-3146 X185

